

House Republican Press Release

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Rep. Klarides, Sen. Finch, Speaker Amann Announce Child Restraint Systems Bill



All expect bi-partisan support for this important safety measure

Hartford- State Representative Themis Klarides (R-Derby), State Senator Bill Finch (D-Bridgeport) and, House Speaker James Amann (D-Milford) today to announce their support for a bill which would mandate the use of child restraint systems in cars for children, depending on both the age and weight of the child.

"This is a positive step to improve child safety on our roadways," Sen. Finch explained. "The leading cause of death of a child over a year old is motor vehicle accidents, and for far too long, our state law has been silent on how to help protect children while they are riding in cars."

Proposed House Bill 5088, "An Act Concerning Child Restraint Systems" would require children under six years old and weighing less than 60 pounds to use approved car restraint systems, children under one year old or weighing less than 20 pounds to use rear-facing car restraint system and children in booster seats to be secured by seat safety belts with shoulder belts.

"We know that proper use of child restraints in our cars can save lives and that rear facing child seats for the very young is critical for their safety," Speaker Amann said. "This is not just about passing a law to better protect our children in motor vehicles, it is also about education and promoting the importance of proper child restraint. In the end, that is the best way to save lives."

"Many people make critical errors, not understanding the changes needed to safely restrain a child in a motor vehicle as the child grows," said Rep. Klarides, who introduced the legislation once again this session. "When a child outgrows a safety seat, at around 40 lbs. or so, they need a belt positioning booster seat to be properly situated in a car seat for the belt restraint to adequately protect them. When a child gets to be over 60 lbs. they can fit into an adult car seat more properly."

Rep. Klarides noted that according to several credible studies, children in this weight and age gap are at an elevated risk to injury when they are improperly restrained in an adult car seat. Adult lap belts will ride up into the abdominal area, and shoulder belts will cut into the neck of a child so restrained in a serious car accident. This makes these safety devices more likely to cause injury in an accident than prevent it.

The bill, which is expected to receive wide support from both sides of the aisle, has been referred to the Transportation Committee, where it will be considered.